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One Two One

Brianna Morgan Ozanne

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, brizanne@gmail.com

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ONE TWO ONE

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Masters of Fine Arts

in

The School of Art

by
Brianna Morgan Ozanne
B.A., University of Arizona, 2005
August 2017

For Mom

Dear You,

You were my first partner. You showed me that with Two, anything is possible. You showed me that true and unconditional love is real. You have always protected me as best you can from everything ugly and scary in the world because, from the moment I was born, my happiness has been more important to you than your own. You don't have to tell me that.

I have always known.

When I was little and I didn't understand what it meant, when that was just the way it is because that's just how mommies are, I knew it. When I was a selfish, ungrateful teenager I knew it, and it scared me, because it meant I was responsible for you, too. And I know it now. You were twelve years younger than I am now when I was born, and I see now that all mothers are not like you and I see now that being a beautiful and vibrant 30 year old woman with a five year old for a life partner must have been very lonely for you sometimes. But I was never lonely and I want you to know now that You and I was never not enough for me.

You were the first one to show me what a true partnership should look like.

For better or worse, you showed me how to sacrifice my own needs for that of my partner. You showed me how to protect my partner from my own fear.

Remember how cleaning the house was a dance party? And how we couldn't afford to fix the heater that one winter and getting dressed as fast as we possibly could in the bathroom still warm and steamy from your shower was a game? Remember when I was seven and you put me in charge of the map and instead of going to Disneyland we ended up in Mexico? And when we found the dead cat in the backyard and you held the shovel while I pushed the corpse onto it with a stick and we both screamed and ran away when it moved but then we got it together and you dragged it out to the alley? Remember the year the Christmas tree wouldn't go into the goddamn stand and you made me go inside so I wouldn't hear you swear again as you struggled with it? And how the same thing happened every time you tried to start the lawn mower? Remember the cockroach rule that if you see a cockroach you must make every effort to kill it, but if you succeed you can leave it there for the other person to clean up? Remember how you read to me every single night before bed and when we were reading Little Women you got so upset when Beth got sick that I had to read aloud to you until after she died and then you could take over again? Remember how I was the luckiest kid on earth to get you for a mom and how I am the luckiest adult woman to have you for a mom now?

I do.

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To my fellow ceramics grads. I love you. You will always be family and Room 133 1/2 will always be the home we shared.

To Mikey and Andy. Words aren't enough. I'm still processing. I suspect it will take years. But thank you. Eternally and genuinely, thank you.

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To the Undergraduate Ceramics Gals. I adore you. Thank you for being sweet and kind and generous and for inspiring me with your creativity and willingness to take risks. Thanks for bringing me treats and giving me hugs and generally making me feel good about myself. I can't wait to see what you do next!

To my students. Thank you for making me laugh, stressing me out, playing along and teaching me more about myself than anyone else in academia ever could.

To my LSU MFA pals. Your friendship has meant the world to me. I hope this isn't goodbye.

To the friends I left behind. Thank you for understanding that I had to bury myself in this. I'd like to come back now, if you'll have me.

To Magda. Thank you for being my spirit guide.

To Mo. I miss you every single day. I am so grateful for you. Thank you for taking such good care of my mom so she could take such good care of me.

To Joe. Because for whatever it's worth, I would not be here without you.

To Sam. For inspiring me to change directions halfway through my thesis year. Your timing was impeccably poor, and I am grateful.

To all the boys and men I have loved and might have loved and could have loved if things had been different and didn't love but liked a lot. I'm sorry if I hurt you. If you hurt me, you are forgiven.

To Taylor Swift. You really get me. Our late night studio dance parties kept me going when times were dark. Thank you for teaching me about accessibility and distillation.

To my sweet pooch, Siri. Thank you for loving me even when I left you alone all day, every day, for the last three years. Whatever comes next, we'll do it together.

Most importantly, to my mother. Like everything, this is for you.

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All images by Jim Osborne excepting images 2 and 17 which were taken by the artist
and image 21 which was taken by Vernell Dunham.

ABSTRACT

These things, they speak in whispers. Come close, lean in, listen up. Whisper back. Tell me everything. I know you've been here, too. I know you'll understand. I know you have a shoebox full of memories just like these hidden deep inside your closet.

I know.

BODY

Introduction

The works in “one two one” tell the story of what happens when two people come together, and what happens when they fall apart. I think of the objects I have created for this body of work as relics from past relationships and past selves, or as artifacts from my own Museum of Significant Moments. The work here is absolutely autobiographical, as each piece is inspired by a specific event or by a pattern of events that I have observed (in retrospect) within a single relationship, or across several relationships. But while this work is driven by my own experiences, it is not solely about them.

APPENDAGE

As a body can function without arms or legs, this paper will function without the appendage. The materials that follow act as supplement to the thesis itself. Written in response to the creation of the physical works and/or in reflection of the events that inspired the creation of the physical works, they make this body whole.

How should you read this paper, then? Two different explanations side by side? And both true. I wish I could instruct you, but I honestly don't know. It might be easier to just read the body. Skip this part.

But, in my mind, what follows explains everything.

Actually, forget what I said earlier.
This is not an appendage.

I try to leave space within my own stories for your stories because we all share the need to feel emotionally connected to one another, to be nurtured by physical touch, to love and be loved, to be heard. And though our paths to partnership vary, we are, most of us, making this journey in one way or another. It is my greatest hope that this work may, even momentarily, bridge the gap between us, you and I, and that our shared experience will bring us together, even if our paths never cross.

HEART

WARNING: It is my experience that in order to truly connect, we must allow ourselves to become vulnerable with each other. It can be terrifying to expose oneself in this way. And it can be just as terrifying to be on the other side, looking at someone else's soft underbelly, wondering if it's something you really wanted to see after all. It's very fleshy, isn't it? You could poke right through it with your finger if you push too hard. (Squish. Pop. GUSH.) But I tell you now, I am stronger than I look. Plenty of fingers have spilled my guts. I've got the scars to prove it. As do you, I am sure. But I always heal. And I am not scared of your fingers. But neither do I claim that my hands are clean. There is dead skin under my nails that I can't get rid of, no matter how hard I scrub or how much time passes. But I will do my best to be gentle with you. I promise to try. Still, we will probably hurt each other someday. A little or a lot. It will be an accident. But maybe not. I hope we can work through it. Unless we shouldn't. I can't begin to guess how it will all end, but I am sure it will be complicated. I am ready to give myself to you now. To trust you, knowing that you will do your best to be gentle with me. Moving forward is your unspoken promise to try. I already forgive you for making me bleed. I am rolling over now. I'm going to show you. If you're not ready to see, this would be a good time to avert your eyes. Or even better, walk away.

Scale

Most of the sculptures in “one two one” are quite small. You could hold them in your hand. I work this way because I want you to have to get close to really see and know them, the way we, as humans, have to get close to really understand each other. When I think about you leaning down to see the details on a tiny sculpture, I think about two little girls telling secrets on the playground, or of the thrill of holding hands with someone for the first time.



Physical closeness engenders emotional closeness. There is a direct connection between proximity and intimacy. My own experiences with loneliness as well as with partnership tell me this is so. I address this issue in several pieces in “one two one”. For example, in “Things On My Nightstand” there is a pill bottle spilling fingertips. I tend to use simple visual metaphors and here I am speaking very directly to the healing power of touch.

Dear Scale,

You speak in whispers.

You say come close,

lean in,

listen up.

Whisper back.

Tell me everything.

From this distance

you can feel my breath in your ear.

From this distance I can really see you.



Dear “Things On My Nightstand,”

These are the things I reach for.

I know what they feel like.

I can find them in the dark.

In “Mechanoreceptors” I have sculpted my own interpretation of the four types of touch receptor cells found in human skin, which detect different types of touch like vibration or pressure. These cells are vital to our emotional health and, in children, to our physical and psychological development. If I learned about Merkel’s discs or Pacinian Corpuscles in school¹, I have long forgotten about them, so I wanted to pay tribute to these unappreciated and invisible little keys to our health and happiness. A book I was reading illustrated slices of each cell in line drawings, each one complicated and lovely and incredibly different from it’s three associates. I imagined what these slices would become if

1 David J. Linden, *Touch*: (United States: Viking Penguin, 2016), 50.

Dear Surface,
If I am you (and I am) then I want to be touched, fondled, stroked, caressed. Maybe someone will want to know what we feel like when rubbed against their cheek. They won’t be able to, of course. That would be inappropriate. But maybe they will want to.



made whole, and sculpted them large enough to be held and admired as objects with weight and consequence. While not all of my work is about physical connection, it really is all about emotional connections—making them and losing them. In “Unmentionable,” 28 tiny, ceramic women’s underpants hang on the wall. This piece has been growing (in size and concept) for months and it’s natural evolution has been a delight to participate in. These little panties range in style from bloomers to boy-briefs to scanty, lace thongs. They are meant to represent, very generally, female archetypes and the way we, as women, present and see ourselves both in and out of intimate relationships. As representations of undergarments, these are innately intimate objects. I push this facet of metaphor through their small scale, which I have decided upon very deliberately. I was careful to choose a size that did not directly reference a common doll (Barbie, Baby or otherwise) as these objects are meant for adult women, carrying and creating ourselves in our own image and vision of who we are and who we want to be each day. I imagine these little representations of self as tiny power objects that can be kept close at hand, cameos of ourselves that act as reminders of our own ability to choose, create and represent ourselves anew. When men walk into my studio while I am making these, their reaction tends to be either a verbal stumbling of

Dear Punky Brewster,

Thank you for being strong and independent and hilarious and feisty. You taught me that humor is disarming, that we don’t need anyone to take care of us, that stripes and polka dots always go together and that a bandana is an indispensable fashion accessory.

Dear Rainbow Brite,

Thank you for your relentless battle against the evil forces of colorlessness and for always fighting with a smile and in that killer outfit. You taught me that kindness and compassion are my greatest weapons.

Dear Care Bears,

Thank you for proving time and again that holding hands with your loved ones and thinking good thoughts causes both rainbows and the downfall of villainous bad guys. You taught me that I don’t have to do this alone.

Dear 1980’s,

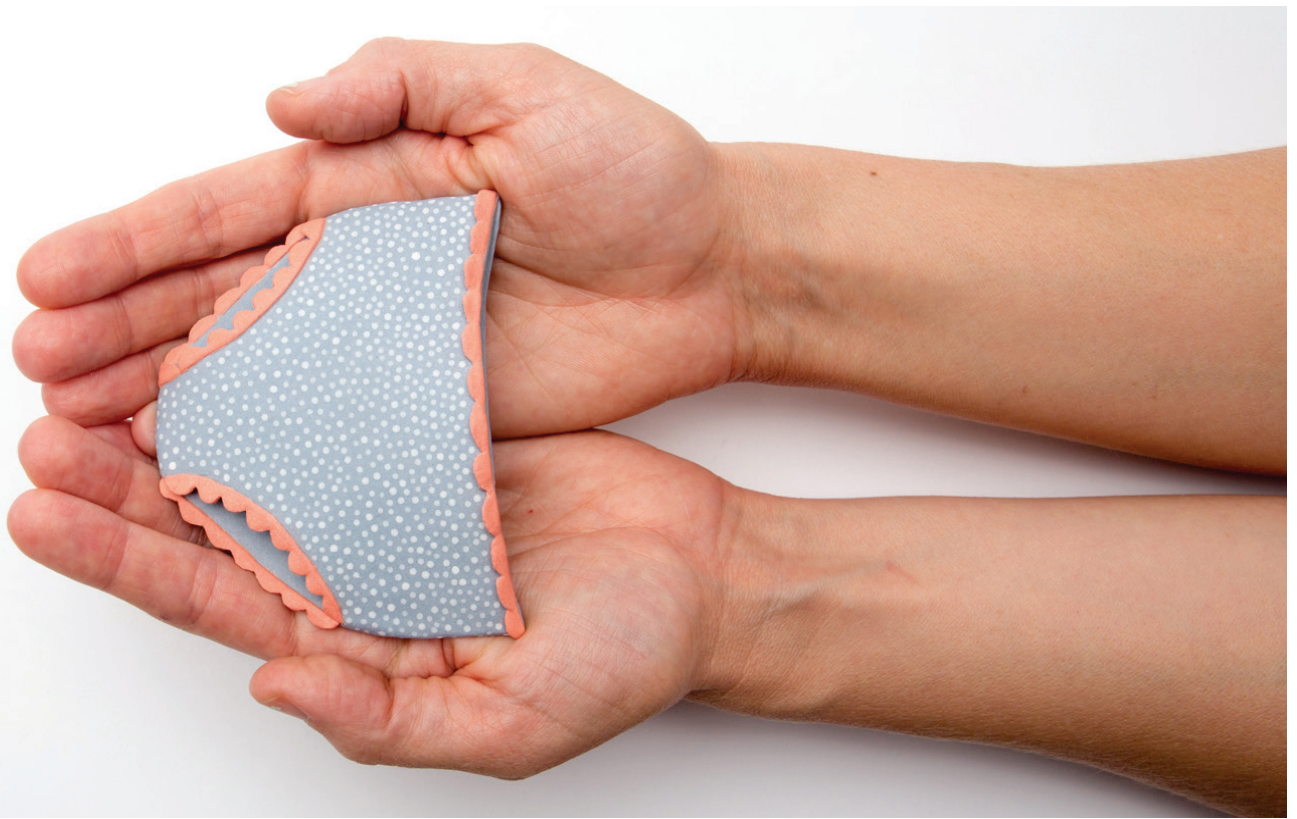
Thank you for helping to raise me, along with Mom and my grandmothers. Thank you for being fierce and weird and for believing that anything is possible. You are my happy place, my naive optimism, and my aesthetic all rolled into one.



some kind to cover up the fact that they may be a little uncomfortable with these little objects being openly displayed, or they make a joke. Those who joke usually point to one of the more typically “sexy” pairs and comment on how much they like it. Women’s reactions are completely different and I have loved chatting with them about the ones they like, the ones that are similar to what they have at home, and those they wish they were brave enough to wear. I have even heard a couple of very surprising personal anecdotes, which I won’t share here. These underwear-centric conversations have given me exactly what I always hope to get from making this type of work—a connection with those who see it.

“Unmentionable” has also succeeded narratively, I believe, in that it leaves that space I mentioned above for the viewer to insert themselves into the work. All 28 of these tiny underpants are telling my story but, as evidenced by the conversations I have had with the women who see them, I am indeed telling theirs, too.





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My relationship with the human figure has changed rather drastically in the last three years. I arrived here as a fairly traditional figure sculptor. The stories I was telling then are basically the same ones I'm telling now, but as happens in "Unmentionable" I now want you, the viewer, to be the figure in the work. You are the central character in this story, and the objects that surround you are the bones of your narrative.

Dear You,

I remember the first time I fell in love. It was with you.

We were at the mall, which seems so appropriate now, looking back these 20 years, because it was the mall and isn't that the quintessential place that teenagers go to experience milestones and other important happenings? I remember setting my foot down on that first step at the bottom of the escalator and feeling stunned by the realization that I loved you in a way I had never loved anyone else before. And up we went. The only comparison I could draw at the time was to being hit in the face with a frying pan. I had never been hit in the face with a frying pan before, of course, but it happened in cartoons all the time and the hapless victim's head would always reverberate and make that boing-oiing noise. Sometimes there were circling bluebirds. I remember that it felt like that. Like a disorienting physical blow to the head. It came out of nowhere and what were you saying? I don't remember now. Neither do I remember what I did next...I must have just blurted it out because how can you hold something that big and powerful inside yourself and expect to survive? Surely one would explode, skin littering the ground like the fragments of thin rubber left behind by an over-filled balloon. Why did all my mental imagery come from cartoons? Perhaps because this love was so unreal, so separate from any earthly feelings I had experienced that I had to draw from fantasy, from the animated place where anything is possible, the only place where one stood any chance of surviving the kind of blow that struck with the force of a falling anvil. All I remember is that when I said it, you said it back.

I love you, too.

We used to make out on street corners because it gave us a thrill to be so open and public with our love. It wasn't a crime but it felt so good to be bad. You were a different kind of boy than the ones I had known before. You were crazy and loud and you did what you wanted—or so you made it seem. I know now that my mother didn't like you, though she kept that hidden from me then. Smart. But still, in the grand scheme of teenage rebellion, we were good kids. I only lied to her a few times about where we were, or what we were doing.

And then we graduated and you moved away to college and we were both very logical about the whole thing. We parted friends and I thought I would die of grief behind my brave and smiling face. The first time you kissed another girl, I dreamt it. Dreamt it that very night, we later discovered, and I thought this must be something, to be connected in this way. And it was something.

I dreamt of you again last night. Dreamt we were back in my old room with our old friends, laying on the floor in a pile of teenage angst the way we used to do. But we were old. Well, not old; we were as we are now. And you said you didn't know what you were doing with your life and I woke up thinking I should call. It's been awhile and you have been far better at keeping in touch than I have. I should call. I will. Perhaps tomorrow.



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Dear “Like Being Hit In The Face,”

It is the same every time.

Every. Single. Time.

And then it is different.



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Process

My process in the studio has also changed drastically since starting this program and there is a direct connection between the change in what I sculpt and the way in which I work. When I was working with the figure I used photographs, usually taken of myself in the pose to be sculpted, from many angles, as reference. I sculpt slowly, so it was important to know exactly how the figure would be positioned, what it would be wearing, holding, doing, before I got started. Deciding halfway through that the figure's arm should be raised in the air instead of resting on its hip could cost me days. For me, the process of creation is as much, if not more, in the thinking of the piece as in the making of it. When I was sculpting the figure, the creative process felt complete before I ever touched clay, and though my hands were busy working, my mind had already moved on to creating the next piece. I found myself losing interest in what my hands were doing, and the work suffered. By the end of each piece I was merely going through the motions and I realized I was becoming resentful of my own sculptures.

I attended a conference and one of the demonstrating artists said "If you are bored it will show somewhere in the work." That struck a chord. He had figured it out for me. I was bored. I needed to figure out a way to combine the thinking and the making. I started making dolls with ceramic heads and plush bodies. The heads were small, no larger than a baseball, and I made them quickly without concern for realism or a plan for what the bodies would look like. It was fun. And as my sewing skills are limited, making the bodies was a challenging adventure in figuring things out, and more often than not, mistakes led to more interesting forms than I had originally imagined. As I thought of the dolls as formal exercises made in an attempt to change my process, rather than as my "real" work, they had no concept behind them. This allowed me to create and change the narratives as I worked on them. Instead of feeling restricted by my original idea, I now had the freedom to "listen" to the piece, and let each step in the making process dictate the next.

Dear Clay,

I choose you because you are soft, like me.
Maleable, like me.
Fragile, like me.

You listen.

But if I don't you crack, break, go back
to the way you were before.
And that's only fair.

You respond appropriately every time.

Thank you.

I can see my fingerprints on your skin
and I remember how I touched you.
But they aren't bruises.
Just recordings.

We made this together.

Dear Quilts,

You speak of home. Of comfort. Of
warmth. Of my grandmothers. Of so
much invested time in the care of even
stitches and of snuggling on cold nights
and waking up on Christmas morning and
folding you up and putting you away for
the summer but then forgetting about you
for years and years and finding you again
and you smell of mothballs and moisture
and home and comfort and warmth, and of
my grandmothers, and all their love comes
rushing back to me as I run you between
my fingers.

This doll phase was short-lived but vital. A quick succession of changes occurred over the next few months and looking back now, it's quite easy to trace the trail of breadcrumbs that lead from figurative sculpture to the body of work in "one two one". The dolls led me to working at a small scale and making objects that were meant to be touched, held, and interacted with. These were objects meant for personal use, and led directly into ideas about intimacy and interpersonal connection that I began to investigate formally and conceptually. I focused for a time on making objects that I intended the viewer to physically handle, but quickly found that to be a limiting parameter, as the challenge then became about influencing viewer behavior and, while that was (and still is) an interesting investigation, I wanted to concentrate fully on the objects themselves. In the end, I was able to fulfill my desire for viewer participation by removing the sculpted figure to make room for the real-life figure to step in as the subject of each narrative. As I began my thesis year, I had only one rule for myself: no faces. A face implies a specific identity that comes with it's own history. A face implies someone, but I want to talk about *anyone*.

Dear You,

There may come a time when I can talk about our years, but not yet. There was that thing that happened that only a few people know about and then that other thing that even fewer people know about and when I think about you and all the might-have-beens my eyes well up and my heart pounds and sometimes my hands start to shake and I think hard about anything else and forget you as quickly as I can so I can move on with my life.

Again.

Maybe it will always be this way. Maybe you will always be a part of me like my skin and my blood. But if I am lucky you will fade into a little pink scar on the back of my neck that I happen to catch a glimpse of once in awhile when I am angling the hand mirror just so to see if my hair looks okay from the back. And it will look fine and I will go meet him for dinner and later he will ask me where I got this sweet little scar and he will kiss it better and I will say I don't remember and mean it as best I can.



Hybridizing

I use hybridizing as a narrative device. As an overarching metaphor, people and situations are never just one thing. We are all onions. By visually combining disparate objects I am able to speak about complex topics with just one piece. Formally speaking, hybridizing is an incredibly satisfying challenge that allows me to combine the thinking and the making, which as I mentioned earlier, allows me to fully engage with my studio practice. As much as I can plan a hybridized object by sketching and thinking ahead, it isn't until I'm actually sculpting that I can make decisions about the subtle ways in which one thing transitions into another.

Dear "Anniversary,"

I remember
staying up all night,
just talking,
fascinated and fascinating.

Has anyone ever been so
interesting before?
So brilliant?

So perfect?



In "Deliberate" a small flock of banana-birds have escaped a cage and can be seen flying away outside a "window" painted on the wall. A lone banana-bird remains, holding onto it's perch, longingly watching it's fellows disappear despite the open cage door. A lot of people have approached me about this piece. Usually the conversations starts like this: Ummmm...what is this piece about, exactly? And then I ask what they think it's about and they say, "Well...are those banana-birds supposed to be penises?" Yes. Yes, they are. *Sort of.*

A simple internet search of the phrase "girl eating a banana" will yield some not so subtle, sexually suggestive images. As a quirky yet relevant autobiographical note, I was ashamed to eat bananas in public from about age 12 to age 28. I had to actively train myself to be able to do this. Bananas are a very convenient, delicious and healthy snack and if I want to eat one while I'm walking down the street I should be able to do so without blushing (and without being snickered at, but that's a topic for another paper.) But "Deliberate" is not about eating bananas. It is about embracing one's sexual identity, whatever that entails for each individual, without shame.

Dear "Deliberate,"

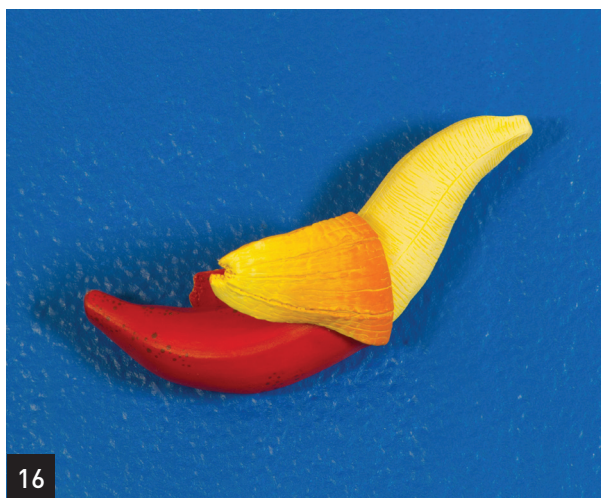
Where did this cage come from? Who put this here? I don't even like birds. I didn't ask for you to come here and now here I am, responsible for you, feeding you, making sure you have fresh water, cleaning up your shit. It's been years and it was just some offhand remark someone made. I don't even remember. And there are more of you now. I don't want anyone to see you. I am ashamed of you. Your constant twittering isn't cute anymore. It's annoying. It's worse than annoying. I drape your cage with a little light-proof cover. It fits perfectly. I made it special. You're supposed to go to sleep when the lights go out.

Can they hear you?

I can no longer pretend you aren't there. It's time for you to go now. You were never meant to be here but I can't do this on my own. I don't know how to let you go. Someone who understands how much I depend on you will have to help.

But you'll like it out there, I promise. Look how much room you'll have to spread your wings. Look how blue the sky is.

So much light.



Dear You,

When you came running out of the ocean, shrieking like a child with your pale arms in the air, those weird sunglasses I hated so much slipping down your nose, your skinny chest covered in goosebumps and muttering to yourself something about bugs in there, I knew that I had been mistaken when I thought I was in love with you.

It was my fault. I really wanted to be in love with you. You were so nice to me. You didn't make me laugh but I made you laugh, and maybe it was enough that you were capable of finding things funny. You had that good job you hated, and I had been living in the woods, where there were bears, and I was scared to go outside so I had a yellow plastic bottle under the bed with a skull and crossbones drawn on it that I would pee in in the middle of the night, or when it was raining. It was a life I had thought was a little bit sexy until I actually tried to live it myself and discovered immediately that enjoying reading under a tree on a nice day does not make one "outdoorsy." But you thought the fact that I had lived that way was a little bit sexy, and I let you think it. You wanted to take care of me. No man had ever wanted to do that before.

But in the end, how can a woman love a man who can fight off a bear with a flaming tree branch in one hand and a kayak paddle in the other so much that she will give up indoor plumbing for him, and also love a man who is afraid of ocean bugs?

And I wasn't just attracted to him; I really loved him. But he hurt me and I lost myself with him, and you helped me find myself again, to fall in love with myself again, to feel desirable, to see again that I'm a damn funny person all on my own. You made me feel talented and special and worth investing in and I hurt you. I didn't know how to be honest with you and not hurt you, and I am honest to a fault. Actually, that's a lie, but I want to be. I couldn't have thanked you back then because I didn't yet realize how you had freed me. I didn't discover the gifts you gave me until years later when I found them inside myself, tied up in neat little ribbons with tags that read "This is deserved. With Love, You." And I can't even send you a thank you note now, though I am so grateful, because, for the life of me, I can't remember your last name.



Hybrid objects appear throughout “one two one”. The fingertip pills have already been mentioned, but there are several others. In “Joint Realization” a toothbrush has a human tongue in the place where the bristles should be and the accompanying tube of toothpaste is a fleshy, wrinkly torso. In “Data” a tissue box issues a long stream of printer paper. In “Out of Order” a ceramic stomach, 25 feet of quilted “intestines” and an aluminum can form a dysfunctional telephone, and in “Anniversary” a bouquet of flowers with a striking resemblance to human ears stand dying in a vase.

Hybridized objects not only act as metaphor, but can be a useful tool in asking viewers to do a double-take. Having to look again encourages one to think again, as well.

Dear “DATA,”

I don’t remember much but I remember there was a time I slept in someone else’s sleeping bag on the floor in an apartment we never talk about. I remember being afraid of someone else’s dog. I remember the science museum and eating ice cream in the big eye, and maybe the hot dog shop? I remember waiting for those long sheets of green and white striped paper to print out and hoping whatever it was would be long so I could oh-so-carefully tear those perforated edges with the little holes away from the sheets and fold them in perfect 90° angles over and over each other, tediously pulling the remaining tail over each time so it wouldn’t rip and then, in the end, I would be rewarded with an accordion of a paper worm that was, truthfully, always a bit of a disappointment after all that work. The strips of paper were so long, longer than I was, and this worm fits in my hand.



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Dear You,

You tell really dumb jokes. And they kill me. Kill me in the best possible way every time. You call them “Dad Jokes” and that’s exactly what they are, even though you don’t want to be a Dad. I think you loved your own father very much. He’s gone now and you don’t seem to like to talk about it, but then, you don’t seem to like to talk about much. But there are things I don’t like to talk about, either, though you probably don’t believe that because does it ever seem to you the way it seems to me that I don’t ever shut up? Your quiet makes me feel loud. And constant. I want to know everything about you and you give me nothing. *Nothing.*

Okay, everything.

I was raised on fairy tales. And on pop music, where every broken heart is followed three minutes later by a new love even stronger than the one before. On rom-coms, where the conflict comes first and the first kiss means that everything is going to be okay. On colorful cartoons where being crushed by a falling grand piano is a minor mishap and every heroine has a lovable and fluffy sidekick. I was raised on Happily Ever Afters. And here I am, desperately clinging to my mid-30’s and maybe pushing the laws of math a little bit to do so, and I still haven’t given up on my own Happily Ever After. I’ve just maybe adjusted my definition of the word “happily” and also maybe of the phrase “ever after.”

But you know what I mean, right?

Mom and I couldn’t afford cable when I was a kid so she would tape movies off t.v. for me, painstakingly sitting through each one to edit out the commercials as well as scenes that didn’t live up to her content standards, which were far more stringent than those set by network television executives. Sex and Violence were abstract concepts in my world and some of my favorite movies had some serious plot holes. But I let it go. I’m good at letting things go. It’s not a lowering of standards I’m talking about here so much as an adjusting of expectations. I heard this podcast and this love expert type of guy said we should start a first date by saying “tell me about your crazy and I’ll tell you about mine” or something like that, and we kind of did that, didn’t we, when we pretended this wasn’t important, or real, which meant there was just no reason to pretend?

Didn’t we?

I am holding onto you but what is there to hold onto?

I am begging you to say the things I want to hear and mean them.

Tell me you can see the future.

Tell me I’m not reliving my past.

Tell me you’ll always be honest.

Tell me you’re listening.

Tell me you’re interested.

Tell me you’re different.

Tell me you want this, too.

What’s that? Oh, nothing. Nevermind.

How was your day, Honey?



Conclusion: Why the things I make are fragile

Dear Fragility,

Hold me gently.

Like a baby bird.

Like a Daddy Longlegs you are rescuing from under the kitchen sink.

Like the only photograph you have of your great, great, great grandmother and might actually be the only photograph of her ever taken, and even though you didn't know her and can hardly make out her face anymore it has her handwriting on the back, and that's something.

Like the dried corsage you keep in a shoebox under your bed because your high school sweetheart gave it to you on prom night and he was your first real anything and everything and that's all you have left of that version of yourself.

Like if you squeeze me too hard or breathe on me wrong I will crumble into a million pieces and even if you glue me back together I will never be the same.

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VITA

Bri Ozanne expects to graduate with her M.F.A. in Studio Art from Louisiana State University in August of 2017.

Her ultimate dream is to combine her greatest loves, teaching and making, into a career that allows her the ability to travel often and eat three square meals a day. She is genuinely grateful for her time in Louisiana but looks forward to a life where she needn't live in constant fear of being devoured by an alligator.